

world—will celebrate his birthday on Saturday.

As a Senator in my first term, when President Reagan came to Washington, I found his vision, forthrightness and high principles, to be measures by which all elected officials can aspire. Ronald Reagan's faith in God and his tremendous belief in the common sense of the American people, were sources of great strength and wisdom. His courage and willingness to stand up for what he believed in were admired by friend and foe alike.

I am proud to say that I consider Ronald Reagan not just a friend, but a teacher and mentor to me and many other Senators back in our early Senate career.

I fondly recall our times together, especially while we were riding horses over my Atoka farm. Our conversations varied from personal stories to serious discussions about the threat of the former Soviet Empire and America's place in the world as a protector of freedom and Democracy. His humor paralleled that of Will Rogers.

Mr. President, I am very proud of the fact that next year, in my home State, the Newport News Shipyard will lay the keel of the Navy's newest aircraft carrier, the U.S.S. *Ronald Reagan*. I wish to join with my good friend from Idaho, Senator KEMPTHORNE, for together we sponsored the legislation that designated the ship with President Reagan's name. It is a rightful designation for his contribution to the demise of the Soviet Union.

I am also pleased that the Reagan Presidency will be honored just a few blocks from the Capitol. The Federal Triangle project under construction at 14th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest, will be designated as the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, thanks to legislation introduced by Majority Leader ROBERT DOLE. I am proud to have been a co-sponsor of this legislation, which has been passed by the Congress and signed into law by the President.

I would like to close my remarks, Mr. President, by paying tribute to Nancy Reagan, a truly magnificent First Lady. In the White House and since President Reagan left office, Nancy Reagan has been a strong voice on significant public issues. Americans everywhere owe her a debt of gratitude for the outstanding work she has done and continues to do to educate the children and youth of this Nation, particularly about the tragedy of drug abuse.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 220) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution and its preamble are as follows:

S. RES. 220

Whereas, February 6, 1996 is the 85th Birthday of Ronald Wilson Reagan;

And Whereas, Ronald Reagan was twice elected by overwhelming margins as President of the United States;

And Whereas, Ronald Reagan is loved and admired by millions of Americans, and by countless others around the world;

And Whereas, Ronald Reagan, with the leadership of his wife, Nancy, led a national crusade against illegal drugs;

And Whereas, Ronald Reagan's eloquence united Americans in times of triumph and tragedy;

And Whereas, the thoughts and prayers of the Senate and the country are with Ronald Reagan in his courageous battle with Alzheimer's Disease; Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate of the United States extends its birthday greetings and best wishes to Ronald Reagan.

SEC. 2. That the Secretary of the Senate shall transmit a copy of this resolution to Ronald Reagan.

Mr. DASCHLE. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE D.C. APPROPRIATIONS CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, it is with some sadness that I come to the floor this evening. Those of us who have been on the District of Columbia conference committee have now worked some 90 days in trying to get a conference agreement. We have had a very difficult time. We have at times reached an agreement and then had those agreements disappear.

This Congress has placed itself in a special relationship with the District of Columbia by recognizing the incredible problems it has, both with its financing as well with education. We have taken the responsibility of doing what we can to make this city proud and to give it the wherewithal in order to improve its educational system.

I think we have a conference report that certainly, although it is not perfect—and that is obvious from the situation we find ourselves in—is nevertheless one which could bring about a resolution of the problems involved with the educational system. It could also, in a noncontroversial manner, provide the economic wherewithal for the District to be able to move forward.

This is an appropriations bill that includes nearly \$5 billion in spending authority for the city of Washington. We were held up by disagreement over a provision of \$5 million for a scholarship program, that represents one-tenth of 1 percent of the money involved with this bill. Yet, it does reach such an emotional state with respect to those people who feel one way or the other about the utilization of Federal funds for scholarships to allow young people to go and seek another school in order to, hopefully, advance their education. However, this disagreement over the scholarship program is such a matter.

I had hoped very much, and had expected, that we would be able to take

up the D.C. appropriations conference report today. The House passed it yesterday. They did so with a fairly good vote. But I find now, after having verified with my counterpart on the other side of the aisle, what would happen in the event that I attempted to bring up the conference report this evening. There would be no time agreement at all, there would be a filibuster, and there would not be any desire to move that conference agreement, in its present state out of this body.

I wish that we would stop damaging the District of Columbia's efforts to revitalize itself. And keeping in mind that by grabbing control as we have—and I do not disagree with that—over the power to do things, we have taken the responsibility, and I am only thinking of the kids. I have spent many, many hours of my own time in this city by going around from school to school.

I spend every Tuesday reading to a young man in the third grade whom I have seen change and he has become so much more able to participate in class in a meaningful way through knowing English. He is a student to whom English is a second language, I am incredibly impressed with his progress. We have 200 Senate staff members who are going every Tuesday and reading to kids. This program is going on. We are trying to do the best we can. But there is a lot that cannot be done without the ability to reorganize what is going on in the school system.

So I just stand before you very, very discouraged at all the effort that we have put forth to try to bring about a resolution which this body could consider, and hopefully adopt, to now find that that cannot be considered. So I will continue to do all I can to find the answers. I know that they will not be easy. But I also will do everything in my power to assure that we can proceed as best we can under the circumstances. I will work to pass the conference report at some later date, but if that cannot be done, I will do my best to work within the structure we have created with the Control Board and others to see what we can do while we wait for this legislation to pass.

I know the school board in Washington, DC, met today and had some concerns. Before I learned those concerns, I had initiated a call and a meeting with the chairwoman of the school board for tomorrow. I will be meeting with her tomorrow and we will look toward the future.

I am hopeful still that we will find this matter, which is of great national concern, should not be used to deprive those who want to help the schools to move forward. We are nearly halfway through the school year now, much needs to be done, and I hope both sides of this issue will calm down and let us proceed in some manner so that we can help the children of this city.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNETT). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FARM BILL

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, the Senate is in session at this late hour—we just finished the telecom bill, a very important bill for our country—but we are in session now because we do not have a farm bill.

I have been on the Agriculture Committee now for 22 years, 10 in the House, 12 in the Senate. I have seen a lot of farm bills. I have worked on a lot of farm bills. Some were contentious, some sort of passed easily. But in every instance—in every single instance—in the House and in the Senate, we worked diligently on both sides of the aisle to try to reach accommodations to get a farm bill through before the end of the year. In most cases, we got it through long before the end of the year.

But I remember some particular ones. I remember the 1981 farm bill when I was in the House. We passed it in the early morning hours of December 17. Why do I remember that? Because my daughter was born about 2 hours later, and I remember being on the floor trying to get the farm bill passed.

The reason I recall that, aside from the fact my daughter was born a couple of hours after we finished the farm bill, was that it was late in the year. It was 1981, a very contentious year in agriculture regarding what kind of farm policy we were going to develop under the leadership of the new administration that had taken over that year. But we got our work done, and we got the farm bill passed and down to the President before the end of the year.

That was with a Democratic House and a Republican Senate and a Republican President. We did not filibuster, we did not hold it up. We did our work, and we got it through before the end of the year.

The hue and cry that came from around the country was that we had waited too long. A lot of the finger pointing was at the Democrats, because we allegedly had waited too long and we did not get the bill through by the end of the year. But we got it through.

Now here we are in February of 1996, and we still do not have a farm bill for this year. I do not want to engage in finger pointing, but I do want to say at least that no Democrat on this side has filibustered a farm bill. We have not held it up.

We passed a farm bill out of the Agriculture Committee in late September. We could have brought it out on the floor in the month of October. We could have

brought it out in the month of November. We could have brought it out in the month of December. But, no, it was not brought up. No, instead, it was taken and put in the budget reconciliation bill so that we did not have an opportunity to really debate it and amend it and fashion a farm program for the future. The President vetoed that bill, as he should have.

So here we are in February, and once again, a farm bill was laid down yesterday. Immediately, a cloture motion was filed to cut off debate, to cut off amendments, to limit the time.

Well, I am not here to filibuster, but I do want some time to speak on the bill, to lay out what it would mean to farmers and rural communities in my State. I want some time to be able to offer amendments that I think are worthwhile. I may not win them, but at least I feel an obligation to my farmers in Iowa to try to craft and fashion a farm bill in their best interests.

Now I understand that at this late hour we are being told that the House is going to go out. The Senate wants to adjourn and come back at the end of February, and we have to pass a farm bill tonight, or we will not be able to get it done because the Senate is going to adjourn for another month. What kind of nonsense is that? We are elected to come here and get the people's legislation passed. I do not know of any compelling reason why we cannot bring the farm bill up, debate it tomorrow, or Saturday if need be. We do not need to be here Saturday; we can debate it Monday and Tuesday, and probably get it done by Tuesday night. At least everybody would have ample opportunity to speak, offer amendments, and have their amendments voted on. Then we can have a final vote on the passage of the bill and send it to conference.

Yet, somehow a gun is being held to our heads tonight, and we are told that if we do not rubberstamp some farm bill that has been crafted in the back rooms—and we do not even know what is in it—that we are going to be held to blame because a farm bill was not passed here on February 1. I am telling you, Mr. President, I find this whole process contrary to everything I believe in, in terms of a democratic Government, and in terms of what I believe in, in terms of the processes here of open and free debate, with amendments, and allowing us to state our case and to try to make the best case we can for our constituents.

So I am sorry, I am just not going to be a part of caving in and rubberstamping something simply because it is late, it is in February, and we have to get a farm bill passed. Our farmers need to know what to do. For Heaven's sake, they need to know what to do. But it was not this Senator, or any Senator on this side of the aisle, that kept the farm bill from coming to the floor in October, November, or December. That was not our call to make. It was not brought up on the floor. It should have been brought up. It should have been brought up in October. Then we could have finished our work and

sent it to conference. It may not have been what I wanted, but at least the process would have been fair and open and I could not complain.

I am complaining now because the process is not fair and it is not open. I intend to make it so. I will use whatever power I have as a Senator to make sure we have that kind of an open process here on the farm bill and not be asked to rubberstamp something when we do not even know what is in it.

But the people that are really suffering are our farmers, along with others involved in agriculture. My farmers in Iowa and throughout the Midwest right now have to make decisions, and they are doing it in the blind—what seed to buy, what to plant, how much credit do they need, how much fertilizer they need. How can they make those decisions when they do not even know what kind of farm program we have? They should have known this and could have known this in December or earlier. We could have had a farm bill passed in December. It may not have been what I would have liked, but at least the process could have been fair and open.

We owe it, I believe, to our farmers and rural communities to act in a deliberate manner. We have a 1990 farm bill that was crafted here in a bipartisan fashion. I was not one of those preferring to extend the 1990 farm bill, I must admit. But at this late hour, it seems almost inevitable that some type of extension is probably the most realistic thing we can do. We can make some changes, I believe, that both sides of the aisle would agree with, such as more planting flexibility and getting rid of base acreage restrictions. We could do that. Then farmers would at least have some idea what the rules are because they have already operated under the 1990 farm bill for the past 5 years. They would know what to expect, what to do, and there would be some certainty out there. Perhaps we would have to come back this year, or maybe even next year. Maybe we should extend it 2 years because it looks like this is going to be a short year with everybody out campaigning. Then maybe we can come back next year and craft a longer term farm bill that would take care of us for the next 5 to 7 years. But this process of saying we have to do something tonight because we are going to adjourn in the Senate for the next month and, therefore, bang, we have to do something quickly tonight—we cannot debate it, look at it, or examine it—what kind of nonsense is that?

So I hope we do not have to adjourn tonight. I see no reason why we cannot be in next week. Those who want to vote to adjourn had better be ready to go back and tell their farmers, no, we thought it was more important to take time off than to debate this farm bill fully, in an open and free debate, with opportunity for amendments to it.